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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1913.

## THE GREAT CARDINAL.

With tapers burning dimly about his bier, the body of the great cardinal is lying in state. A few days more will end all the solemn pageantry of the church of Rome; it will be committed to the tomb. Mariano Rampolla will be buried; his name will live in history.

The great cardinal was one of those men of magnificent attainments who seem destined to raise their mortal honors. He was prince of the church secretary of state under Pope Leo, logician, diplomat and scholar. Visitors to his palace in other days looked up him with reverence for it was whispered by every tongue that when the venerable Leo passed, Rampolla, the brilliant, would be his successor.

At last came the lamented death of the Pope. The conclave met; the doors were closed; the balloting began. Rampolla was so clearly the favorite of the first vote that his elevation to the papacy seemed certain. Then, in a dramatic moment fortune deserted him. One of the Austrian cardinals, his eyes streaming with tears, arose and announced that he had been instructed by his government to protest against the election of cardinal Rampolla. In the silence that followed, Rampolla's chances vanished.

But how wily were the bankers. The Boston and Maine is now paying more than 7 per cent for the borrowed money and will be fortunate to make any dividend on the property bought. Thus we reach the real beneficiaries—that Bienville combination of New York bankers, well known to fame. The patrons of these banks had surplus funds, for which the banks had to find investments. The bankers persuaded the Maine Central to sell, the Boston and Maine to buy, and adjusted the whole matter so that the purchaser lost interest on every share of Maine Central stock turned over. And now that the railroad faces bankruptcy, it calls on the shippers to pay the interest due New York bankers.

This cause is probably exceptional; so perhaps was the somewhat kindred disaster which befell the New Haven. Many railroads are without such entanglements, and do not have to purchase what New York banks want to sell. Yet when we state this specific case and ask the direct question, there can be doubt of the answer. Where ends the blame of this week? Look to Wall Street.

## WHO WRECKED THIS RAILROAD?

Travelers tell us that long after a wounded elephant has passed through the jungle, one may hear the crash of falling boughs. Experience shows us that for months after a great corporation has been wrecked one may witness the downfall of dependencies it has destroyed.

The country has an illustration of this in the present condition of the Boston and Maine railroad. This property was for some time in close affiliation with the New Haven Road, and has suffered with its ally. A group of government officials who have been investigating its affairs have just announced that unless its rates are increased, the Boston and Maine is bankrupt.

In opposing this plan, we waive questions which are weighty—the expense of the undertaking, the inevitable difficulties of government control and the doubtful experience of England.

We base our opposition solely on the ground that the Federal government is at present well occupied in the discharge of its constitutional duties, and should not attempt further business ventures. We go further; as far as possible government always should avoid financial enterprises that can be conducted by private means. The function of the central government is not to transact the business of the individual, but to give the individual a reasonable chance in competition, a stable industrial system and the protection of just laws.

We are not willing to concede, however, that the present telephone and telegraph systems of the country are in every instance rendering proper service at reasonable rates. On the contrary, we might cite instances where neither the service nor the rates are proper. But such reform as is needed should come, in our opinion, through regulation and not through ownership.

And, happily for the country, private individuals are still competent to transact honest business in a lawful manner.

## THE RICHMOND SPIRIT.

In upholding the "Richmond spirit," as exemplified in the movement among other things, to "secure charter changes needed for the good of the corporation, and in expressing the view that it should be a matter of deep regret that the same spirit is not shown in its own community, the Fredericksburg Journal says:

"No one need marvel that a city goes ahead and takes first rank with corporations of its size in the United States, with a spirit of this kind exhibited by its citizens. It is but the natural course of events, and a power in the making of a city that cannot be withheld. But Richmond has just cause to be proud of the work of its citizens and the motives which prompt them to take a keen and active interest in their city. It is a possession that but few cities can boast of. The great progress made by Richmond has made in the past ten or fifteen years in a splendid silent effort, what can be accomplished by the combined interest and work of the men of a community, and it should be a matter of deep regret that the same spirit is not shown in this community."

Kind, appreciative and deserved words those, which, however, should stimulate our people to still greater co-operation and practical display and encouragement of the "Richmond spirit." Richmond's possibilities for civic, industrial and business advance are limited only to the possibilities of development of that spirit.

Therein alone lies the measure of her capacity of attainment along all lines making for the realization of aspiration to become a "great city" in the highest, most comprehensive and most enviable sense of the term. Concert of endeavor is the bedrock of greatness, which in turn is the foundation no less of material prosperity than of civic duty, which is but synonymous with civic righteousness by the use of the wireless.

The foremost prophet of this new era in transportation is J. B. Foley, superintendent of telegraph of the Lackawanna Railroad. After a series of experiments, Mr. Foley is satisfied that the wireless is both practical and sure in railroad service, and he points out a number of advantages which will follow its adoption.

It is possible for a train dispatcher to set the semaphore blades of a signal-post at any point within the "reach" of his wireless. In case an operator gives the wrong signal, he can correct it at the next block; where the dispatcher fears a collision he can from his office set every danger signal along the line. This sounds too good to be true, but in proof of it, Mr. Foley cites the two cases where his railroad operated all its trains on a crowded division by wireless. The test was accidentally, to be sure, for the telephone and telegraph wires were down, but for more than two hours the wireless directed every train without the least hitch.

If the new experiments justify present hopes it will be possible to keep every train in close touch with the dispatcher's office, regardless of its location. A "lost train" will be unknown; if there is a breakdown, the conductor can communicate by wireless with the proper authority and procure assistance. In the same way, it is claimed, that through freight traffic can be handled more easily and more promptly with wireless. Frequent halts at way stations and the consequent wear-and-tear on equipment will be reduced.

More magic to the wireless and still greater victories! No man finds fault with its proverberial!

The most touching valedictory is not that of the college graduate, but that of the Old Man, when he says "sooth" as he surrenders the year's surplus to me and the offspring.

A State Senator from Colorado says that within ten years the President will have a cabinet of women. If so, it will be hard to determine the exact location of the President's wife on such occasions.

Evidently some Republicans think that it is now a case of "Root, Roosevelt, or Die."

"Panadas in full bloom in Canada," says an article. Well, just think of the acres of violets now shedding their fragrance in Richmond!

## MR. BURLESON'S REPORT.

It is better to use well the power one has than to seek its extension. It is better to operate the present postal service economically than to take over the vast telephone and telegraph lines of the country.

Palminter-General Burleson evidently thinks otherwise, and proposes that the government assume control of all channels of communication. In his annual report, a digest of which we print this morning, he advances the best possible arguments in behalf of his proposal, and states his case with no small show of logic, but his reasons are not convincing.

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## WHAT WAS NEWS FIFTY YEARS AGO

Reprinted from This Newspaper.

## AVERILL'S RAID.

Averill's raid reached as far as Salem, but brought no results. The commissary stores left there, including corn and bacon, were burned and the railroad was torn up.

The eastbound freight train barely missed capture as it passed Salem half an hour before Averill's troopers arrived. A train bringing the provost guard from Lynchburg, under Captain Clegg, also narrowly escaped. The train was close to Salem when the engineer observed the blue-coats and promptly reversed. Averill is now supposed to be retreating.

## Butler in Norfolk.

General Butler is active in Tidewater. The beast was in the city himself a few days since on a tour of inspection. General Bates, the military commander, met him at the station and congratulated him on his first visit to Norfolk since the rebellion began. General Butler plans the creation of a military commission to try citizens.

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## The Legislature.

The Assembly sat yesterday in discussing the bill proposed by the judges and other officers. A bill was introduced contemplating the use in the public service of free negroes convicted of misdemeanors. Another bill presented was for the relief of the soldiers' families within the lines of the enemy. A bill was also introduced to prohibit traffic in gold, silver and the currency of the United States.

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## Fredericksburg Still on the Map.

A correspondent from Fredericksburg says: "I am told that the town is still alive, though its disasters during the past year have numbered 2,000 souls."

## Expllosion at Sumter.

An official investigation has been made of the recent fatal explosion of powder at Fort Sumter.

Details are published of the destruction of the Monitor Wreck.

## Richmond's Ships in Distress.

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## Injury to the Armistice.

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## Hubert Stanley, whose approbation used to be considered praise indeed.

## Buyings at Night.

Is there any statute in Virginia prohibiting the buying of cotton or peanuts by merchants at night?

The best search we could have made would disclose any.

## Pearl Oysters.

Please inform me in what waters the best pearl-bearing oysters live, and if the shells are ever found of solid "mother of pearls."

Verdun was won by the preliminary hearing of Mrs. Patterson. Allan suspected of treasonous communication with the enemy. Among those who testified in behalf of Mrs. Allan was Miss Hoge, daughter of the Presbyterian minister. Mrs. Allan is being detained at the St. Francis de Sales Asylum.

## Hooge Lectures To-night.

Owing to the inclemency of weather last evening, the lecture by Dr. Hooge on "English and French Sentiment Toward the Confederacy" has been postponed. It will be delivered to-night.